PART 3

Computer and Internet

Access locations

Overall, 85% of the respondents are current computer or Internet users and another 8% are former users. Computer users were asked if they use computers or the Internet at work, school, the public library, or some other place in the community, including a friend's or relative's house. In addition, respondents were invited to identify other locations where they use computers or the Internet. Figure 49 shows where Seattleites access computers and the Internet. Most respondents (60%) endorsed two or three places and 12% endorsed four or five. About one in five (19%) endorsed only one and 10% named none of these places.

49. Seattle residents have computer or Internet access at many locations

Based on all respondents

Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

Percent with access at this location
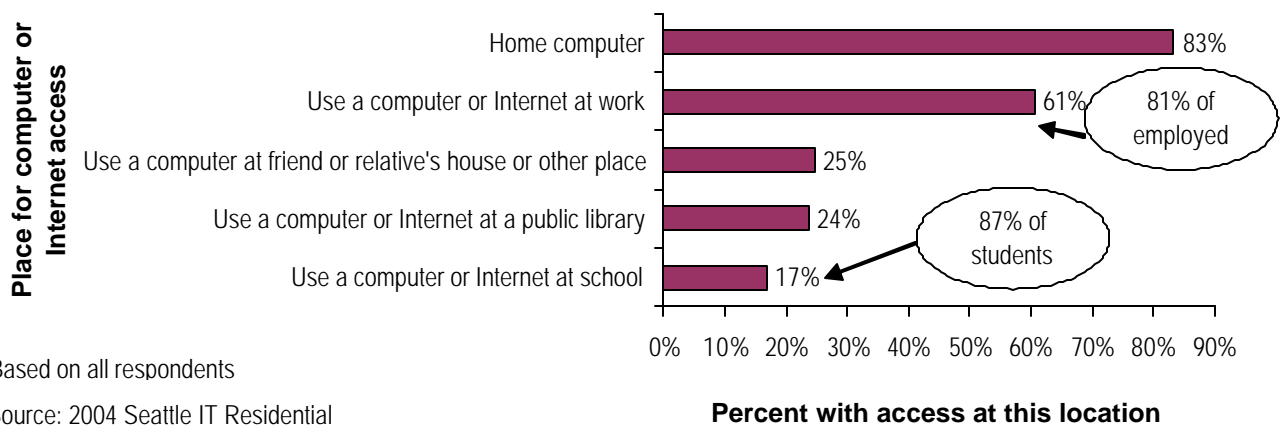
About one percent mentioned using and Internet café and fewer than one percent mentioned the airport, cell phone access or hotels.

Some of these places were also asked in the 2000 survey. Figure 50 shows an increasing trend at

50. More Seattleites have home computers in 2004 than in 2000, but gains at other access points are not significant


*p<.05

Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

Percent with access at this location
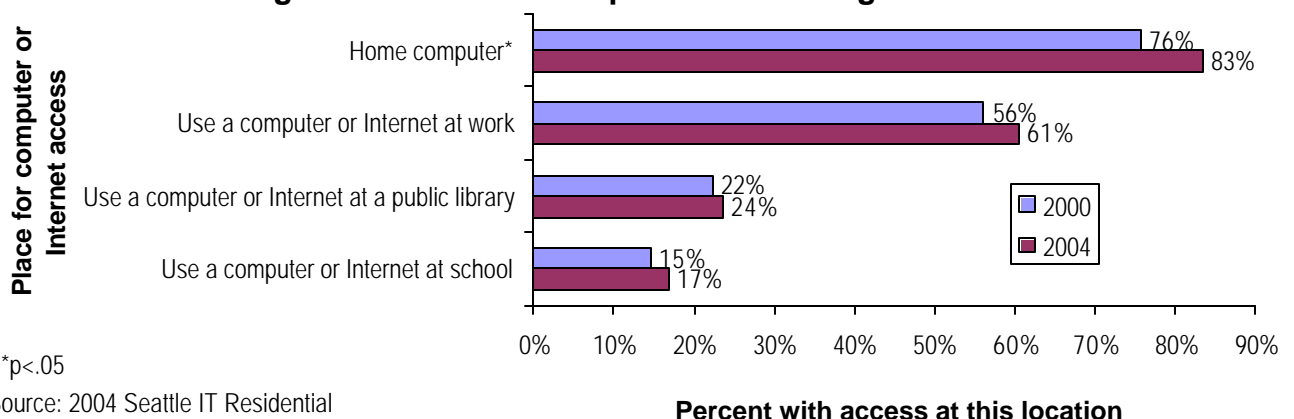
each of the locations, but it reached statistical significance only for home access.

Non-computer users

In an effort to understand some barriers to computer and Internet access, the 233 people who identified themselves as current non-computer users, or who reported a very low level of computer use were asked for all the reasons they could think of for not using a computer or not using it more than they do. They were allowed to identify multiple reasons which were then coded into the categories illustrated in Figure 51.

51. About one in five of the people who don't use a computer or don't use it much say it is because they have no desire or need to. One in 10 say it's because they have no access
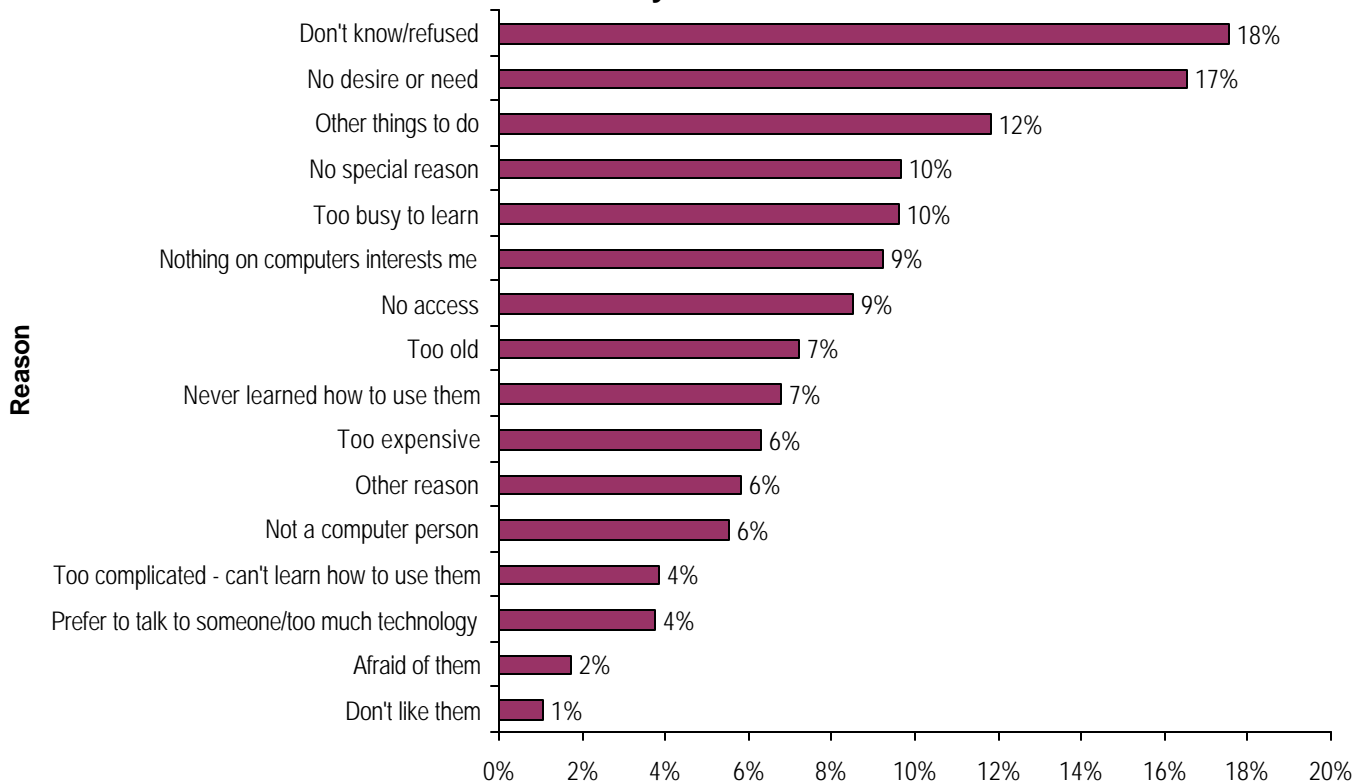
**Percent naming this as a reason for not using a computer**

About two respondents in five gave responses that suggested having made a choice not to use computers or not to use them more (too busy, no interest, other things to do, no need or desire). Figure 52 shows that this type of response was identified by more of the Caucasian non-computer users than the non-computer users of other ethnicities.

52. Caucasian non computer users were more likely than other ethnicities to say they don't use computers because they don't want to
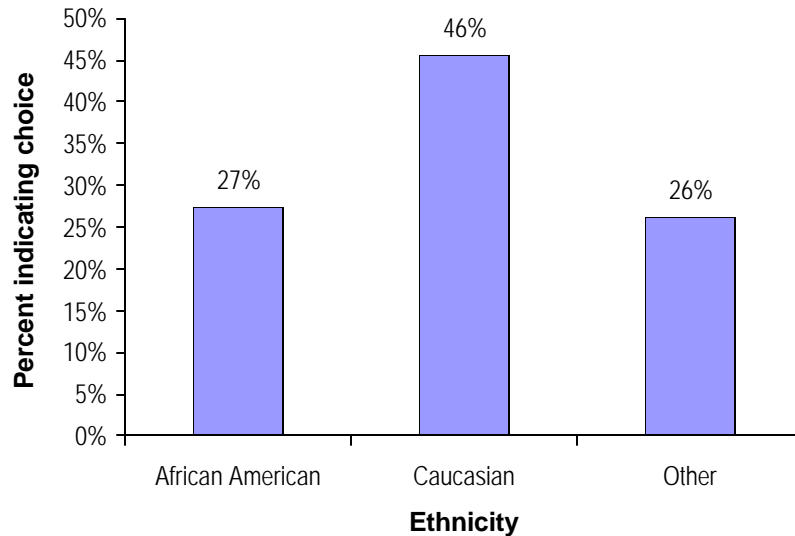
Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

53. Overall, women are more likely than men to say they don't use computers because of circumstances (no access, never learned, too expensive), especially in ethnic groups other than Caucasian or African American
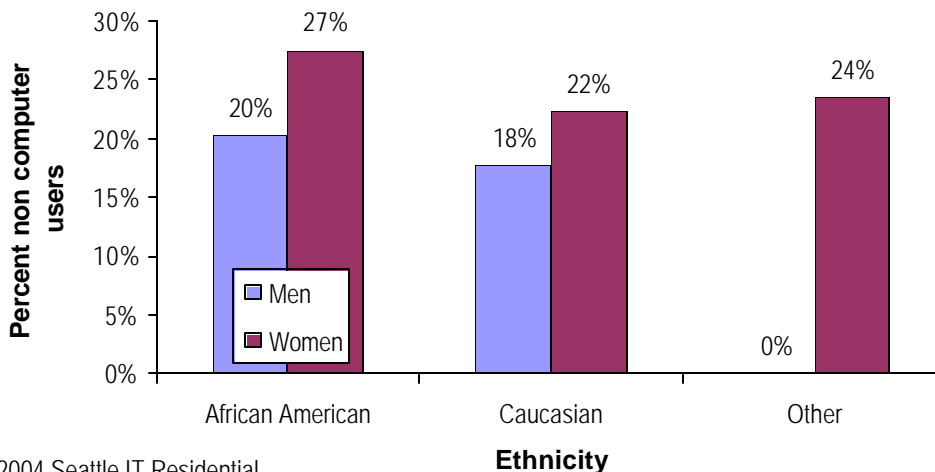
Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

About half as many (19%) gave responses suggesting that their lack of use is due to circumstances beyond their control (no access, never learned how, too expensive). Figure 53 shows that women are more likely than men to give this type of response, especially in non-Caucasian or African American households.

About as many (18%) gave a more personal reason (afraid of computers, can't learn to use them, don't like them, too old, not a computer person). Individuals giving this type of reason were equally distributed across the demographic groups.

Who are current computer users and patterns of changes

Multiple analyses were conducted to identify which subgroups are least likely to have computer or Internet access. This could be important as more services are made available online. If certain subgroups have less Internet access, they would be disproportionately excluded from getting services in this way and without awareness of these patterns, policy decisions could be made that make it especially difficult or expensive for individuals in these groups to access services.

Figure 54 illustrates an interaction between income and being a computer user. It shows that in 2000, about one-fourth (26%) of the lowest income respondents had never used a computer. By 2004, half that many of the lowest income respondents have never used a computer. This means that access is improving for this group, but that income remains a significant predictor of computer and Internet access.

54. Respondents in households with less income are less likely to be current computer users in both 2000 and 2004, but gap is narrowing
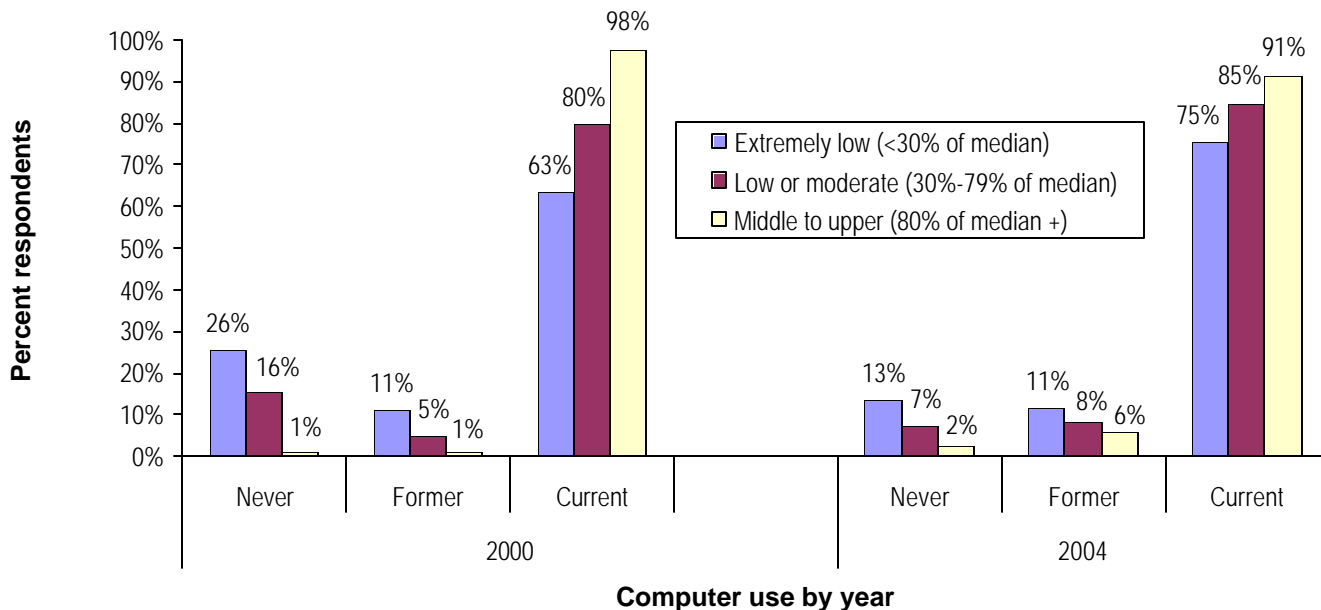
Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

Figure 55 shows that seniors are the most likely never to have used a computers, both in 2000 and in 2004. This persistent and dramatic effect seems to be mitigating slowly, as nearly half (44%) of the senior respondents in the 2000 survey said they had never used a computer, compared with nearly one third (30%) in 2004. However, note that while the percentage of seniors who have never used a computer decreased by 2004, the percentage of senior who have used a computer in the past, but do not use one currently increased (from 8% to 18%). Thus, only about half of the senior reported current computer or Internet access in either year.

55. About half of seniors were current computer users in 2000 and 2004. More have moved from never having used computers to having used them in the past but not currently.
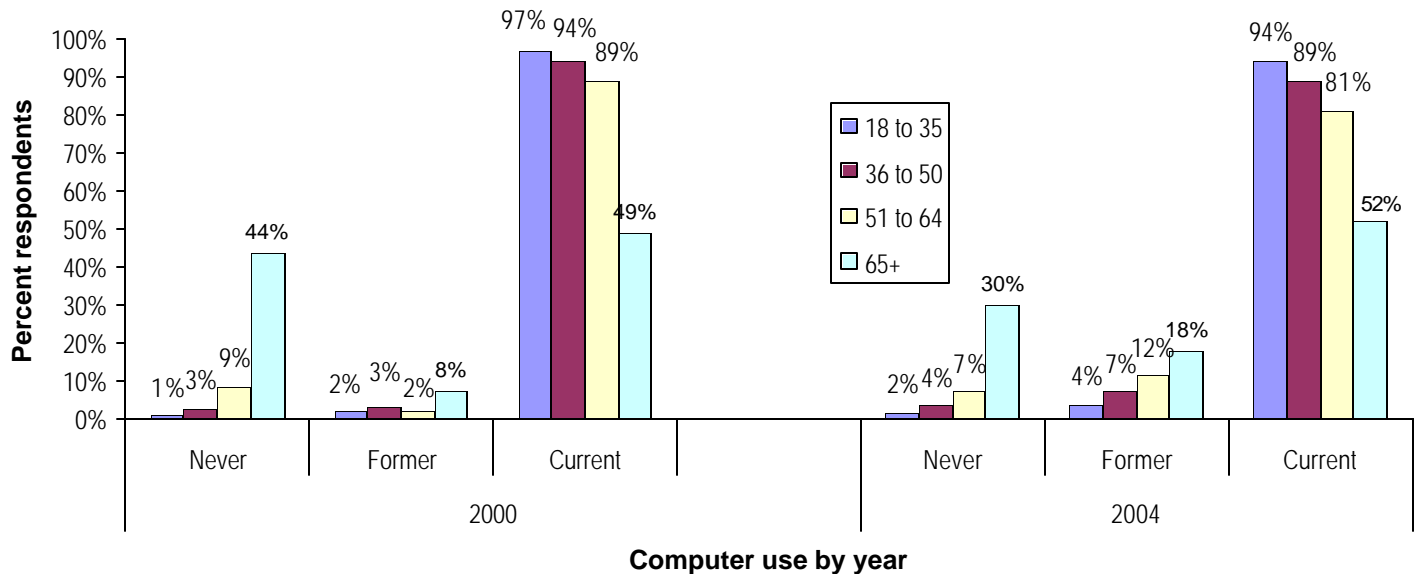
Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

Figure 56 shows the changing impact of education on computer use status. As with the other demographic factors typically associated with less technological access, the impact of less education is smaller in 2004 than it was in 2000 so that in 2004, 71% of those with the least education are current computer users, compared with 60% of this group in 2000.

The percentage of those in the lowest income group in 2004 to say they have never used a

56. Little change in current access among those with more than a high school education; decrease in percentage of those with less education who have never used computers and corresponding increase in percentage of current or former users
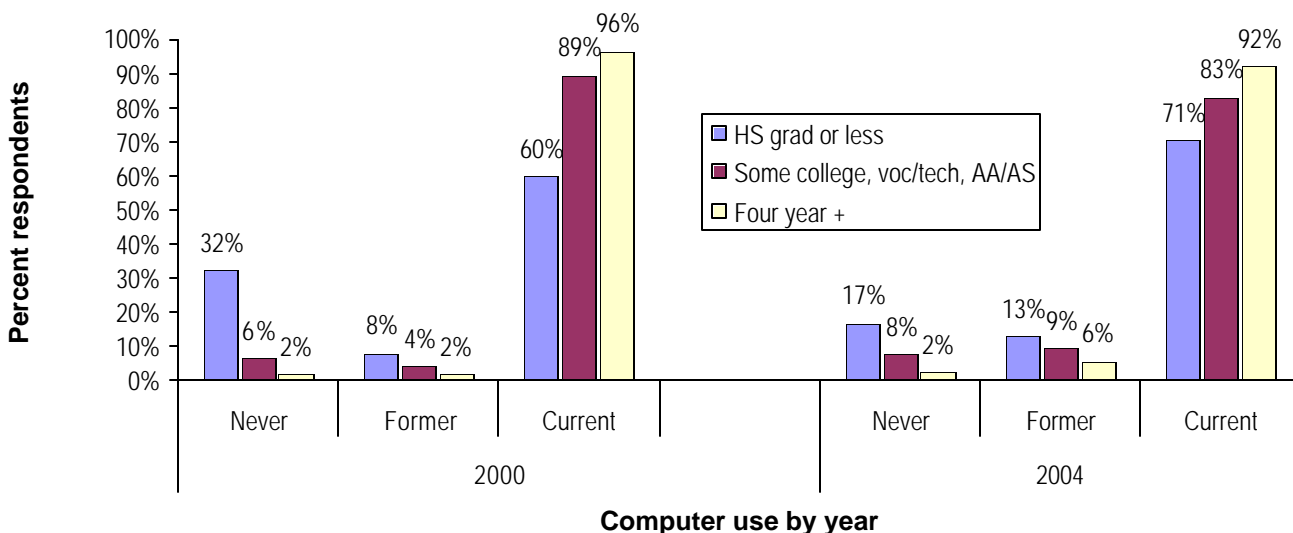
Source: 2004 Seattle IT Residential

computer was half what it was in 2000, indicating growing access. However, it is important to keep in mind that even though access seems to be in the process of equalizing, it is not yet equal. Therefore, if services become more difficult or expensive to access by phone, letter or in person, people with less education, less income and seniors will be differentially disadvantaged.